

Thomas Almet Engelman

By Andrew Lanez

RANK: Corporal (E4)

DOB: November 5, 1947

DOD: October 27, 1969 (Age 21)

WAR: Vietnam

HOW HE DIED: He was on patrol on the battle field. He led his squad by marching in front and came into contact with a hostile booby trap.

MEDALS: Bronze Star, Purple Heart, National Defense, various Vietnam service medals

Thomas Almet Engelman was born on November 5, 1947 and died on October 27, 1969 at the age of 21. He lived on Woodlawn Avenue in Chula Vista and was attending Southwestern College before being drafted into the Army. He received various Vietnam War service medals, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart.

Before college, Thomas Almet resided in Imperial Beach. He grew up with his parents, Arthur and Frieda and five siblings. In order from youngest to oldest, he was second to the youngest among Ron, Tom, Jerry, Jim, David, and Bill. He attended Central Elementary School and then Southwest Junior High School. Mr. Engelman " was an all-star football player at Mar Vista High. He played center and defensive tackle. The County All-Star Game was a glorious time for him as he played against the best from Hoover, Chula Vista, Castle Park, San Diego, Sweetwater, and Lincoln among others while he represented the Mighty Mariners. Thomas was offered a full football scholarship to UC Berkeley, but had to complete certain credits to be qualified.

Thomas attended Southwestern College in Chula Vista when he moved to Woodlawn Avenue. He had an interest in architecture and would likely have pursued that career. Thomas was an outgoing person. He would often snow-ski or body surf as a diversion. He was a ladies man with a date every week. He drove a '67 Plymouth and took it to Tijuana to have it painted yellow. He would go out for a good time with his college buddies to the Corona Bowl in Tijuana or the Tijuana Country Club. When the U.S. government drafted him, he took it as "one of those things that you gotta do."

His life was redirected into the Army and the Vietnam War. He kept contacts with his loved ones at home through his letters. His main concern was that he did not want the others at home to go through the hell that he 'was in. He served as a corporal in the Vietnam War. His death came about on the battlefield while he led his squad by marching in front and ran into a hostile booby trap.

Those who knew him will always remember Thomas' bright smile. His name appears on the Vietnam Wall at Wall in Washington D.C. at Panel 17 West, Row 123.

